

FAREWELL SERMON,

PREACHED TO THE

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

IN CORNWALL, VT.

MAY 29, 1836.

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BY THEIR LATE PASTOR,

REV. JEDIDIAH BUSHNELL.

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S E R M O N .

Numbers xxvii, 16.

“LET THE LORD, THE GOD OF THE SPIRITS OF
ALL FLESH, SET A MAN OVER
THE CONGREGATION.”

THESE are the words of Moses to God, when he was about to be separated from the people of Israel. He had long had the charge of that people, and was now called to resign his commission to him who gave it. Of this resignation Moses did not complain; but he felt an anxiety for the people over whom he had been long placed. After giving them a system of instructions to guide them in future, he breathed out his soul in the following prayer, “Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep, which have no shepherd.”

Every person will see, that my text expresses the appropriate desires of a pastor, resigning his pastoral office over a people. These desires relate to a successor, and to the happiness of the people under his administration. All this is adapted to the present time and circumstances amongst ourselves.

To bring this subject into view, I will

I. DESCRIBE THE MAN, WHOM I PRAY GOD TO SET OVER THIS CHURCH AND CONGREGATION.

II. SHOW WHAT SHOULD BE THE CARRIAGE OF THIS PEOPLE TO THEIR PASTOR, TO BE HAPPY UNDER HIS MINISTRY.

I. *I am to describe the man, whom I pray God to set over this church and congregation.*

He should be a man of *approved and eminent piety*: This will be conceded by all. A person of ordinary piety, is not qualified to be a minister of the gospel. His doctrine, his office, the forms of his consecration, and his whole calling, are, according to the scriptures, pre-eminently and exclusively holy. Not only the bible, but the consciences of all men, demand of ministers pre-eminence in holiness. It is self-evident, that their advantages to attain to it, are beyond those of others; and they are to go before the people, and should eclipse, and outshine them all;

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then they are examples to their flocks; and let it be remembered, that example in ministers, is power. A pastor whose piety is rusty, is a terror to his people. God grant, therefore, *first of all*, that you may have a man of eminent piety, to be your future pastor, to be a lamp before you.

He should be a man of *discreet prudence*; not of sudden impulses, and hot decisions. Such things frighten the gentle and lovely spirit of the gospel, and oftentimes misguide a whole people. Religion loves full investigations, and scorns those which are partial. Says the excellent Foster, "first impressions are fallacious guides to right actions." I believe, that I have committed more mistakes for want of investigation, before I decided, especially on novel subjects, than from any other cause, during my whole life. And it is submitted also, whether the evil has not considerable extent among ministers at large. I am also convinced from observation, that this church and people have oftener misjudged, and thrown themselves into unhappy results, from the same cause, than from any other which can be named. These sudden impulses, and partial examinations, are the false inductions, against which, logicians, and the best of theologians, have warned in every age, more than against any one thing in all their writings. The evil has been the foundation of error in every generation, and the bane of truth. May your future pastor be one not governed by first impressions, or sudden appearances, but one, who investigates, before he judges, and thinks, before he speaks.

He should be a man of *education*. Not only the truth demands this, but the age in which we live. One truth is plain, that no minister can communicate to an audience, what he himself does not know. No man ever despised learning, but he who did not possess it. Education enables a man to investigate, simplify, arrange and make plain the truths of salvation, or any truths which he aims to communicate. It is designed to furnish the mind with knowledge, and to assist the thoughts and expression, so that the sense will be clear, and the truth forcible. On the other hand, how painful it is to see a grand doctrine of salvation, in the management of a preacher, who cannot investigate, nor arrange, nor express himself clearly; but who surrounds his subject with some affected pompous expressions, which rather shed darkness than light on the noble truth. Your numbers, in this place, are such, and your degree of education, that no uneducated, superficial man is sufficient to meet the wants of this people, though he may be pious, and labor with zeal. Besides, an educated minister is a continual help to the improvement of the rising generation, and at the same time, disciplines the minds of the whole church and congregation

into just modes of estimating the truth, and shows them, when a thing is proved, and when not proved. Your future minister, therefore, should be a man of solid education.

He should be a man of *simple verity*. This looks lovely in any man, but in a minister, it has great force on the consciences of a guilty world. It has opened a passage, and carried many a minister through a host of evils. Preachers of the gospel are under great temptations to depart from it, owing to the desire of mankind for extravagant accounts, and fondness in ministers to be thought favored instruments. But if a minister is not careful on this point, God will send leanness into his soul, and he will even learn his people to make light, both of truth and falsehood. No man who indulges in this habit, will be able long to be unseen. All a minister's preaching therefore, all his narratives, all his conversations, should be simple verity. It should shine in his very features, and in every expression of his whole being. If he finds himself at any time, to have been under a mistake, he should correct it before his people, that he may stand before them unsuspected, as an honest man. President Edwards resolved, that he would "always speak simple verity." Such a man will find support in his own bosom, and lift up his face to God. He need not, and he will not be afraid of his own pulpit. But the moment, that he begins to vary from simple verity, he brings trouble into his own conscience, if he has one, and if he has none, he will soon sacrifice his influence in the confidence of the people. May simple verity, therefore, be on the breast-plate, and in the whole life of your future minister. A single detection of a departure from this, will remain on the minds of his hearers, many years.

He should be a man of *studious habits*. No man can avoid being superficial, when this is not the case. In such cases the human mind loses its discipline and balance, and becomes diffuse and irregular in its communications. Some men of native talents, who hate study, sometimes nearly smile at the studious habits of others, and seem to pride themselves in being able to command attention without it. But the effect is invariably seen, in their own leanness, and in the poverty of knowledge among their people. Such pastors educate a people to be like themselves, whose latter end is usually leaner than their beginning; and what is worse still, they are left to be carried about by every wind of doctrine. The bible has put this particular beyond a doubt. God commanded the priests of old to carry beaten oil into the sanctuary. Paul directed Timothy to "give attendance to reading," and to "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Ministers also

are further charged to bring out of the treasure of God's word, things new and old, and to give to every one their portion of meat in due season. It is true, a minister should not spend all his time in his study, an error into which some have too much fallen. Neither should he study too much over the midnight lamp, and thereby waste his strength in the season for nature's repose. But study he must, a due proportion of his time, and establish studious habits, or become a tiresome preacher to a stated audience. He should study to make study a pleasure, and carry the pleasure down to his old age.

He should be a man *well versed in systematic theology*; one who can trace and connect the relative proportions of the truths of the bible, and present them in the beauty of their moral harmony, giving to each its due place and importance. Truth thus seen, powerfully affects and charms the mind. Such a preacher will interest and impress an audience more in six months, than others, unacquainted with the symmetry and relative proportions of bible truth, can in years. To illustrate this, an ignorant man sees some beauty, when he looks upon the starry heavens, and imagines, he discovers some signs of order and harmony there. But he will never feel that charm, and deep awe at the sight, that an astronomer will, who has investigated that system of worlds, in their connection and relative proportions, and has discovered how they "stand or move" in obedience to their Maker's will. The reason is plain; parts only, and those obscurely, are presented to the mind of the ignorant man. Whereas the whole comes down to the astronomer's mind in all its proportions, beauty and grandeur, which convince, charm and overwhelm him with astonishment and wonder. A thousand other similitudes of a like nature might be adduced as illustrations. So a man, ignorant of the systematical connection of bible truth, may be a good man, and preach not much else but truth, and sometimes render some branch of truth striking, and may do good in this apostate world. But such a man will never be able to preach the doctrine of justification by faith without the deeds of the law in its connections with the other great truths of the bible. He will even be exposed to falter on the doctrines of atonement, regeneration, and many others. It is plain also, that the preacher cannot carry his audience beyond where he goes himself. But when the preacher has investigated, and gone into the system himself, and seen its beauty and felt its power, he can bring it out to his people in all its proportions, charms, and majesty. May such a man be your future minister. Ignorance may smile here, but wisdom and grace never can. If a preacher would have solid heat in his own bosom, it must be drawn from such sources as

these: And if he would fill the house of the Lord with an awful solemnity, it must be under the combined influence of the great truths of divine revelation.

He should be a man, who makes the *sanctification of the church, and the conversion of sinners*, the great object of his life. To this the people call him, when they invite him to be their pastor. They do not invite him to associate with all the separate interests of the community, which often clash one with another, and which in the present tense, cannot be associated directly with the object of his calling. But his object is specific, and of a heaven-born nature. His oath to God, at the time of his consecration, is of the same nature. He there engaged to remove hindrances, and waste his powers, and consume his life, to carry forward the objects of his ministry. For this end also was he clothed by God with his commission. Here therefore, should he fix, and never be moved by this tumultuous world. We have some fine examples of this. Christ's was the most luminous; he let Cæsar take care of his separate interests. He let the Jews take care of their worldly economy, while he was engaged about his Father's business; for this he lived, and for this he died. The attention and spirit of all the apostles to their calling were the same. Paul said to his hearers, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified, and was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." The same has been the spirit of the best ministers on the whole theatre of providence. A minister, therefore, must be a man, who has an opinion of his own, formed on his best judgment of the bible, from which he should not be easily moved. He should be no party man. Every party will endeavor to enlist him, and make a draft of his influence to their separate interests. But on such subjects he should hold no conference with flesh and blood, lest his own work should cease. In short, he should be a man, who can be neither tempted, frowned, flattered, led, or driven from his appropriate calling. No man, but such a man, can ever safely manage this church and people, or any other, in things which pertain to the kingdom of God. How afflicting the case, when a minister has not moral courage enough to stand at his post, and work in his own vineyard, but through fear or covetousness is driven all ways. He usually has, however, his reward in contempt to his person, and in the distractions of his people.

He should be a *zealous preacher*; a cold one is not of much service in this sleepy world. To speak of God's love, of sin, of heaven, of hell, and of the death of Christ with a dull heart, and frozen lips, will never move apostate nature, nor much enliven a christian. He should, however, be a man, not of a

fiery zeal, but of solid heat. Fiery zeal misguides, and is soon extinguished ; it blazes for a short time, and disappears, and moral death, as cold as ever, usually follows. But solid heat burns like a lamp, and is perpetual, like the holy fire on the Jewish altar. Elijah was a fine example of this, when the moral death around him was nearly universal, he burnt like a constant flame. So Christ was ever shining in holy zeal. The apostles were other examples. Luther, Whitefield, Edwards, Brainard, Payson, Martyn, Mills, and thousands of others in past ages, and thousands now alive, and multitudes in humble life, have had a zeal, which has advanced forward, and shone brighter and brighter, until it has left the world. Such is the character of the true minister of the gospel. Fitful zeal is animal, and usually selfish, it cannot be divine ; and all people, who have this only, should suspect themselves.

He should *not be a man greedy of the world*. If worldly things, however, are communicated to him, he should direct them to be managed with economy, that nothing be lost. In so doing, a less sum will support him, and more be left to support the household of faith, and to convert the world. It is possible, some ministers have failed in their temporal management, and the waste of property has followed. "But," says the scriptures, "they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction, and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil." In view of this passage, the apostle says to Timothy, "O man of God, flee these things." The priests of old were not permitted to expect much wealth in this world, but it was added for their consolation, that the Lord was their inheritance.

He should *not be a man fond of debate*; and yet be able when duty calls to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Some ministers seek opportunities to enter the lists with all they find. But it is a great unhappiness ; their people partake of the same spirit, and usually both minister and people are alternately filled with pride and mortification. God judges the practice. The apostle calls it 'vain jangling,' and warns ministers most solemnly against it.

Your minister should be *no boaster*. Says the apostle, "we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord." Says Christ, "if I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true." Of all fulsome sights in this world, this is one of the most painful, to see a minister ascend the pulpit to proclaim himself, and leave Christ in the shade. Such self-commendations shame the ministry.

Your minister should *never ridicule*. Ridicule is the weapon of infidels, because they have no solid arguments. But how

silent the bible is on this subject except to condemn it. God commanded the Israelites to destroy the idols of Canaan, and it was lawful for them to do it; but he would not permit his people to ridicule them. His words are, "thou shalt not revile the gods." Michael also, when disputing with the devil, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, "the Lord rebuke thee." Ridicule is not serious enough for the pulpit; it rouses the apostate passions of men, and makes bad worse. The minister therefore, who employs it, afflicts the pious of his congregation, and provokes the passions of the ungodly, and associates himself with the manners of infidel men. Christ reasoned, persuaded, and threatened, but never ridiculed. All men know that ridicule is not a lawful weapon for a minister, and if he employs it, they will return it full measure.

Your minister should be a man of *much prayer*; praying always with all-prayer. He should be a man of patience, not easily vexed, nor soon angry. If he is devoid of patience, he will be more miserable than most men in their callings. He must be an active man, or his work will be left undone. He must consecrate his life to his duties. Says the apostle to Timothy, "give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all." Again, to enforce the same duty, he says, "no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier." The fact is, in this office, God demands the whole man, his heart, his talents and his time, and has declared, that stewards must be faithful. If there are some exceptions to this general rule, and doubtless there are some extreme cases, they should be managed by necessity and not covetousness. Mr. Baxter, of old England, states in his *Pastor Reformed*, that he did not see how ministers of the gospel could find time for fishing and hunting, or the amusements of life, when the state of their flocks demanded the improvement of every moment of time. Some loud raps, it is believed, will be given from the state of souls in another world, on ministers' wasted time.

Your minister should be a man *ready to confess his mistakes and faults*, and thereby shun a thousand evils, for who can brow-beat a minister confessing his sins: It is true he may be assailed in that duty, but he will command an influence in the consciences of his abusers, and honor the cause he is bound to sustain. If his faults are not such as shame him out of the ministry, confession will soon obliterate them from the minds of his people. How quick our Lord and his disciples overlooked Peter's denial when they saw him weep bitterly: it was soon forgotten, and Peter put forward in his work. But if a minister will not see his faults, and what is worse still, if he is stubborn

in them, the Lord take care of such a minister, for this world never will. Perhaps, there is no particular in which ministers of the gospel oftener fail.

Your minister should not be *abrupt and rough* in his manners. This in a minister stops the ears of all classes of people, both good and bad, vulgar and polished. He must be kind, modest, gentle. Says the apostle, "we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." Again, he says, "gentle, showing all meekness to all men." He must also be a lover of good men, given to hospitality, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, and hope in the exercise of his whole ministry; and, if he cannot do great things, he should be happy to do small. If I recollect right, Mr Newton in some of his works has something to the following amount, though not in the exact words. He states, that George Whitefield and some others were enabled sometimes to let down their nets, and draw thousands of souls to the shores of salvation, in a short time. But as for myself, and others, he remarks, we angle about the streets of London, and catch one here, and one there, and bring them to God, after much toil and labour. Then adds, "while others do great things, we are happy to do small." Among the solitary instances thus brought to Christ by the instrumentality of John Newton, were Wilberforce, Dr Scott, and some others of great note in the Christian world. When the influence, which these men have had on the salvation of mankind, is duly estimated, how great will appear the instrumentality of that one man in the conversion of souls. Let ministers, therefore, when they conclude that they cannot do great things, be happy to do small.

To close this head, your minister should be a *promoter of revivals of Religion*, and a supporter of all the benevolent institutions of the day, which in his judgment are so managed, as to advance the common interests of mankind.

Such a minister, as we have defined, should be your pastor, *May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set such a man over this church and congregation.*

Here it may be proper for me to remark, that this first head of discourse has doubtless brought to your minds many faults, which have attended my own ministry among you. The head, which is to follow, will bring to your remembrance your mistakes, as far as any have prevailed. I have no wish, at the present time, to expose either your faults or mine; I hope they are all forgiven. But my object simply is to give, without personal reflections, my last advice to a people, to whom I wish all good, on the subject of a future pastor, and their carriage to him. This

may lead to a correction of mistakes, and be profitable to you when I can influence you no more.

II. I AM NOW TO SHOW WHAT SHOULD BE THE CARRIAGE OF THIS PEOPLE TO THEIR PASTOR, TO BE HAPPY UNDER HIS MINISTRY.

You should receive him as one placed over you in the Lord to counteract your sins, and point out the path of life to you. His office is to take you by the hand, and guide you out of this apostate world, to heaven. In this work he must honor God, or be guilty of perjury to his glory. He must probe your wounds, however, painful to him or you. He must administer the balm of life, whether accepted, or not. His very occupation is to eradicate lusts, and plant in the subdued soil the seeds of eternal life. He must watch, instruct, reprove, warn and rebuke, with all long suffering and doctrine. His location and work will be acknowledged to be difficult above all others in this world, and to demand the co-operation of all his people. Who would dare to lift a finger to counteract the influence of such a man, engaged in such a calling? a calling to rescue from eternal death, and conduct to immortal salvation, those committed to his charge. You should therefore, receive him in this capacity, and co-operate with him in all his labors.

In the next place, be *affectionate* to your minister. This will sustain his courage more than your money. From a people, there is nothing like it to a minister's bosom on earth. He will be happy on brown bread, if you will mingle your souls affectionately with his. He will take hold of hands with you, and be willing to live and die with you. Such affection oils the wheels of his whole ministry, and emboldens his soul to every enterprise for your good. It is the sweetest thing, that exists between the heart of a minister, and those of his people: it to him is solace, yea, energy and power on his mind. But cold and distant feelings in this relation, and, what is worse, hypocritical professions of friendship, have directly a counter effect, and are mildew and death on the soul. A good minister in the State of Connecticut, with whom I once had some acquaintance, from whom his people for a season seemed to withhold their affections, endeavored for a while to pursue his labors among them, and to love the more, though the less he were beloved. But at last he sunk under his discouragement. One day, in his depressed state of mind, meeting one of his deacons, he said to him in the bitterness of his soul, "*do feel with me, or I cannot live.*" My hearers, you should not forget any thing due to your pastor, but if you do forget some things, do not forget to be *affectionate to him*.

You should respect your pastor for his *office sake*: this is put-

giving an honor upon Christ, remember, he is not his own messenger, but Christ's ambassador : to disrespect him is to disrespect Christ, who sent him. Says our Savior on this very point, "he that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him, that sent me." Again, "he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." The apostle Paul also directs to give ministers double honor. God has put this honor upon them, and commands the world to acknowledge them as his ambassadors to guilty men, and declares, that disrespect to them, is disrespect to him.

Let your deportment to your minister be always in *simple verity*. This makes a people appear to their pastor some like the inhabitants of heaven, holy. Do not give a wrong meaning to his words and actions to wrest them from their true intention. Never report him, as unsound in doctrine, when he preaches nothing, but simple bible truth. Do not try to render him unpopular for sinister ends. Do not exaggerate reports about him. Never varnish over the misconduct of others to him. Never lay a stumbling block for his feet to fall. But in simplicity and godly sincerity, let your speech and behavior be to him in simple verity. And should his carriage to you be improper, yours will be just to him, and your consciences, and your Maker, will both approve. Such a people will not be afraid to meet their minister's face, neither in this, nor the coming world. But, if you sacrifice simple verity, your consciences will fill you with dismay before your pastor, and remember, that it is some difficult to receive profit from a minister you have wronged. I would, therefore, say to this people, let simple verity grace your conduct in all your associations with your future pastor.

Be *careful of your ministers character*. Do not slander him; never magnify his faults. Do not give circulation to flying reports concerning him. Be in the habit of rebuking slanders and insinuations against him, whenever you meet them. In all such things, give him an opportunity to speak for himself, and hear his own explanations, before you judge his case. I knew a man once, who made a law in his family, that no person should ever be slandered at his table. You will all say that was a good law for every household. How much more important to observe this rule towards your guide to heaven, whose occupation is cast among the intrigues and clashing interests of a world at enmity with his calling. A minister's character is his personal shield in his labors, do unto him, in this particular, as you would others should do unto you. The counter course of slander and insinuation is a sin, which without speedy repentance, will sooner or later be visited of God. It is true, a good man may

expect to live through it, but the conflict even for innocence is sometimes long and distressing, and involves a minister's time and usefulness, and sometimes overwhelms a people in destruction. The words of Nicodemus to the Jewish Sanhedrim on this subject should be engraven on the heart of every parishioner, "*does our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?*"

Do not make your minister *an offender for a word*, or some small mistakes. The prophet in his complaint to God, against Israel says, "they make a man an offender for a word." Men, while in this imperfect state, who speak and act as much as ministers, will be always guilty of such trespasses. Even Moses, who probably was the most holy man, that ever lived, spoke unadvisedly with his lips. Elijah was a man subject to like passions with us. Failings also are recorded of nearly all the inspired writers. It must be so, that the excellency of the power of the ministry may be of God. Occasional failings blemish, but do not destroy a christian character. Habitual sins persisted in will bring any man's character down to the grave. Moses' sins were occasional, his general character, therefore was sustained. King Saul's were habitual, his therefore, perished. In your carriage, therefore, to your pastor, in this particular, consider, that you yourselves are also in the body."

Never repeat your pastors failings, if you discover any, to your families. It is believed, that some parents for so doing have been the cause of the damnation of their children. A worse practice in parents can hardly be named. It should be remembered, that children or domestics are imperfect, and inexperienced on the subject of character, and where parents state to them such failings, they are exposed to conclude, that the whole character is bad. Where parents and guardians take this liberty, the minister will soon be looked upon with jealousy, his person held in contempt, and become a subject of cant and joke in the domestic circle, and his instructions lost to all their minds. The practice in its effects is awful, it hardens children to the whole gospel, has a powerful tendency to make infidels, and comes very near to banishing all religion from the household. Let parents and guardians therefore beware how they rehearse their pastor's failings to their families.

Do not devour too much of your minister's time in your intercourse with him. You should visit him, but your visits should be well timed. Long visits at a minister's study are for a general rule too great a draft on his time. Besides, short visits are much more effective than long ones. Long visits almost always become tiresome, and the ideas sparse. Never visit your pas-

to loiter away time, or to go over the nonsense the day. If your visits are such, and your pastor be a good man, and cannot reform you, he will long for the time to come for your absence. Remember also, that, if he is a bad man, and delight in such visits, he is not a safe companion for you. In short, your pastor must devote time for your intercourse with him, but that time must have its bounds, and sacredly consecrated to some valuable end. Let your visits be sensible ones, let your conversation be such as will refresh a good man, and matters most commonly will be well timed.

Do not demand more visiting of your pastor than four able, ministers can perform, and attend to their other ministerial duties. On this subject, it seems, our world has never learned to reason. Would they divide a minister's time, after just deductions were made for ill health, and the sickness of his family, and other domestic avocations indispensable, between his studies, and public labors at home and abroad, which are numerous beyond all common calculation, they never would draw the conclusions, which they do. I do here advise every parishioner to inquire into this subject, and make a just division of the time, and ascertain how great a share of it belongs to him, in one year. It is true, a minister must visit his people, Paul went "from house to house." But there must be limits to this duty, or his pulpit will be shockingly lean; yea, if he have a stated charge, he will soon be an affliction to all the sensible part of his congregation. It is utterly impossible to satisfy the present demands of people on this subject without a pastor's neglecting more than half of his other duties. It is conceded the people are sincere in their demands, but it is desired, that they would make deductions, divide and subdivide a minister's time, and learn to reason. As this visiting according to scripture must be done, the people should help their pastor in this service. It is every person's duty to carry eternal life to his neighbors: in this way, a great amount of labor to gather in the lost sheep of the house of Israel, may be socially done. I think, that President Edwards' course for himself was a good one: he assembled his congregation in groups, in different parts of the town, preached some, and conversed some with them, and thereby made a saving of much time; cases which, he could not reach on these occasions, he reserved for personal visitations. It is said by some, that President Edwards had not a talent for parochial visitations. But it is said by others, that he exceeded all men in probing the hearts and consciences of those with whom he conversed. The fact was, the mind of

that great and good man was placed on all his duties, and he could not suffer one branch of duty to devour the others.

Be careful to satisfy your pastor's temporal necessities. Pay him punctually the sum, which you stipulate to him, and more, if needed: Three evils arise from neglect on this subject. 1st. He cannot be punctual himself, and his character suffers. This is a withering blast to his influence. In such cases he shrinks before his creditors: he can neither meet their eyes, nor hold up his head; and who can describe the poverty, which he feels within. If any man on earth is to be pitied, it is such a minister. 2d. He loses his confidence in the rectitude of his people; they suffer in his estimation, and who can bring such men freely to his bosom? 3d. Those, who do not pay him, hate to see him. Facts, and the consciences of all men, prove the truth of this remark; nature must change her course to have it otherwise. There is but one way to avoid all these calamities, and secure a happy course: it is to pay your pastor punctually the demands which he has against you, and which God has enjoined. Permit me to say, I do hope, that this people, in some way, which their wisdom shall devise, will sustain themselves in this course to their minister. It will be of vast importance to you and your pastor, and will have no small bearing on the salvation of souls.

Lay before your pastor your cases of conscience, and ask his counsel and prayers. This brings before him the desire of his heart, the very object of his ministry. There is nothing like it in this world to give emotion to his soul: it will raise his courage, if he be half in despair. To illustrate this, I will state two facts, out of many, which have come under my own observation. Many years ago, at a time of religious depression among this people, when my mind and those of others, sunk in some measure in view of the moral state of our affairs; one evening, as I sat in my house, rather pensive, some persons knocked at my door; they were introduced, and having taken their seats, one of them said to me, "we feel in trouble for our souls, and we meet with difficulties, and have come to ask for your counsel and prayers." I could hardly believe my own eyes, and ears. The sight of their persons, however, and the sound of their voices, and the agony of their feelings, rushed on to my mind with powerful emotions, and under God, my slumbers were broken, and my courage was raised. They told me also of several others, who had been impressed, at the house of God, on the preceding sabbath. This, when communicated to my people had the like effect on their minds. A glorious reformation followed, which terminated in an addition of more than one hundred members to this church. Some years after, when spiritual

things again ran low in this place, one pleasant afternoon, as I was sitting in my house, not knowing of any uncommon attention to religion in town, there came up to my door a young man, who was introduced to a seat. I noticed, when he entered the door, something a little luminous in his countenance, but could not tell just what it was : the thought, however, struck my mind, can he have come to converse with me on religion. As soon, as he took his seat, he said to me, "I have come to tell you something, should it prove to be true, I trust, will make you glad." He then said to me, "I have a hope that I am new born." The suddenness of the event, the appearance of the man, and the modesty with which he related what God had done for him, under God, diffused an influence through my whole mind. Suffice it to say, it raised my courage and that of my people, when it was stated to them. Another blessed work of God followed, which resulted in the addition of nearly one hundred more persons to our communion. There is nothing among mere men like such spiritual facts to move ministers, and move people forward in the work of the Lord. Here I add, that it is no small share of the wisdom of a pastor, and his church, to duly improve such occurrences of Providence to promote revivals of religion. In such gracious works, God improves exciting causes, when they are of a solemn scriptural character. I would, therefore, say to this assembly, let your minister have the advantage of the moral state of your minds.

I concisely add, *pray much for your minister*, stay up his hands to God, the apostle trusted, that he should be brought forward, through the instrumentality of the prayers of saints. Gladden his heart by your uniform and punctual attendance on his ministrations. Remember if it be your minister's duty to preach, it is your duty to assemble to hear him. Associate and help him in every thing good, which he undertakes ; and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

To close this head of discourse, *if your pastor sins, proceed regularly against him as the gospel directs, and let him be heard and tried at a regular tribunal.* Thus proceeding, if he has done wrong, and is stubborn in his offence, you have him in your power. But if you adopt the opposite course, and slander and judge him unheard, you may commit much sin, make yourselves much trouble, and suffer much in public opinion. Fix it in your minds, therefore and never depart from it, that every man on earth has a right to a regular tribunal, to a fair process and a full hearing, before judgment is rendered. Now may the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, *grant* that such may be your carriage to your future minister.

It now remains for me to take my leave of you, as your pas-

tor, which, all things considered, I readily do. I commenced preaching the gospel thirty-eight years ago last February. The five first years of ministry, except a few weeks, I labored in the new settlements of our country, most of the time an itinerant missionary in behalf of the missionary society of Connecticut. I have always considered, that as the most happy and useful period of my whole life. I have been the pastor of this church and people, thirty-three years, on the day of my dismissal. I have generally been happy with my people. I rejoice that I have been located here in providence, and am well satisfied with my dismissal, at the present time. I think the time has fully come for that event. I thank you for all the respect, which you have shown me through a long ministry, and for all the assistance, you have afforded to my person, and family, and to the cause placed under my labors. We all have had our faults. I have had many. I thank you for the courtesy with which you have overlooked my mistakes through many years. It is true, and not too much to be said, at this time, that you have been inclined to bury my faults, rather than hold them up to public view. This has been much to your credit, and for my comfort. I thank you also, for the donation, which you generously voted me, at the close of the sitting of the council for my dismissal, as expressive of your respect and kindness to me. Suffice it to say, that I am entirely satisfied with the adjustment of my dismissal, and of all things in the settlement of our affairs, *and am this day happy.*

I earnestly desire, that our affections may continue to be mutual, and our intercourse free and happy, while we live. It would be easy for me, though dismissed, to make you some unhappy, and for you to make me and my family so; but I pray God, that this may never be the case; but that we may live together, as those engaged in the same holy cause, and bound to the same happy world, where so many are gone, who now rejoice in their once mutual fellowship here below.

Live, my dear people, together in love. Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Make the sanctification of the church of God, and the salvation of sinners, your ruling object here below. Subordinate all other valuable interests to that last end of God among men in this world. Let past differences of opinion, if there be any, be forgotten, and every person combine in sweet concert to build up the house of Lord. Associate together, and bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts forward to the salvation of this people.

A thousand tender emotions crowd on my mind, in parting with you, and mingle with my hopes and fears for your future welfare. Fourteen times, within the space of thirty-three



years, has the Holy Ghost from heaven been sent down upon this people with divine power. Some of these revivals have been very general through the town. Others of them have been more limited in their influence. But all of them have been very happy in their results. During the same period, six hundred and eighty-two persons have been added to this church: some of them by letters, but far the greater proportion of them by profession. Among these there have been some failures, which have caused us grief. But the greater share of them have maintained that consistency of character, which has enabled them to pass as believers among men. Many of them have removed to new settlements, and it is hoped, are building up Zion there: In this respect we have swarmed like a hive.— Many others have died, who, it is hoped, are now in glory. Some of them, in their last moments, manifested a holy triumph, which death itself out-braved. They now sleep in the dust, let them sleep on, until the Archangel's trump shall raise their sleeping dust and we see them again in body and soul. Many also from this church have been educated, and have gone into the gospel ministry: all of these, it is believed, have been useful, and some of them have risen to eminence in their work. A large class of others are now in a course of education for the same blessed service. It has long been my opinion, that in these streams emitted from this church, she has done more good abroad, than at home. How far, I have been an instrument in the hand of God of promoting these good works, is, at present, unknown. This people, it is believed, have done much. To those, who still remain impenitent, I would say, the Lord take care of you, and give you a future pastor, who may win you to salvation. My dear people, with whom I have so long labored amidst the frosts of winter and heats of summer, pray for me and my family, and may I pray for you. My brethren of the church and congregation, I bid you an affectionate farewell.— *And now may the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh set a man over this church and congregation.* AMEN.